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Viewing cable 08MONTERREY121, DRUG VIOLENCE FOCUSES ON SMALL DEALERS; PUBLIC YAWNS

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MONTERREY121**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MONTERREY121	2008-03-12 19:41	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Consulate Monterrey

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2011/02/10/index.php?section=politica&article=006n1pol>

VZCZCXRO3142
PP RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHGO RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS RUEHTM
DE RUEHMC #0121/01 0721941
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 121941Z MAR 08
FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2768
INFO RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3660
RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RUEABND/DEA HQ WASHDC
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHMC/AMCONSUL MONTERREY 8138

145517
2008-03-12 19:41:00
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Consulate Monterrey
CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2768
INFO RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3660
RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RUEABND/DEA HQ WASHDC
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHMC/AMCONSUL MONTERREY 8138

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MONTERREY 000121

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/12/2018

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [ECON](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: DRUG VIOLENCE FOCUSES ON SMALL DEALERS; PUBLIC YAWNS

MONTERREY 00000121 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Bruce Williamson, Consul General, Consulate
General of Monterrey, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Although the number of drug executions and kidnappings remains high in Nuevo Leon, the drug violence has shifted its focus to small time drug dealers and people who owe them money. Public interest in this issue is declining as people have become accustomed to drug killings and see that the violence primarily affects low level actors. In one notable success, state police detained members of a gang which perpetrated kidnappings and killings. The federal forces continue to conduct some local operations against safe houses and kidnapping gangs, but the state and local police have done little. End Summary.

¶2. (C) By objective standards, 2008 has been a violent year in Nuevo Leon. As of March 11, there have been over 20 drug executions, a figure which, if annualized, would put the state ahead of the record pace of 107 for calendar year 2007. We also understand that kidnappings continue, particularly of small time drug dealers or people who owe the cartel money. One gang which kidnapped Mexicans who own small or medium sized businesses in Northern Monterrey (targeting those who have ready cash) has been put out of commission. This band, called 'los similares' (because they passed themselves off as Zetas, the enforcement arm of the Gulf Cartel) killed one kidnap victim, and collected ransoms on five others, netting tens of thousands of dollars from each one, among other crimes. There have also been significant increases in other crime, such as bank robbery, which number 27 for the year so far, ahead of the record pace of 56 for 2007.

¶3. (C) In 2008 the profile of drug murder victims has changed. Except for two cases, the victims of the drug executions in 2008 have all been small time drug dealers or people who owed the cartels money. In contrast, there were assassinations of 29 police officers -- including police chiefs, commanders and federal AFI agents -- and a Nuevo Leon state deputy in 2007. The killings have also been less public. In 2007 there were cases of shootouts in broad daylight, but now the victims are killed more discreetly. According to the contacts of one of Consulate law enforcement official, these killings have been conducted within the context of the truce between the drug cartels and constitute 'the settlement of accounts' of drug dealers who have not been following the cartel's rules. These contacts also report that some drug cartel members have been laying low in Nuevo Leon due to Mexican federal government pressure on their organizations in the neighboring state of Tamaulipas. In addition, the drug cartels may now realize that high profile killings are counterproductive because they generate increased law enforcement heat.

¶4. (C) The state of Nuevo Leon has reacted minimally. On January 21, presumed drug hitmen killed a Nuevo Leon judge, Ernesto Palacios Lopez, who had presided over a 2005 case

involving two state drug kingpins. This was the first assassination of a state judge and it created considerable public outcry, in the end provoking legislative efforts to provide security for state judges. A state police sergeant was attacked on March 5, but he escaped unharmed. The state police reacted the next day by apprehending 381 people, although the vast majority were released the next day and so far only four have been arrested on any charges (but not the assassination itself). In contrast, on March 2, presumed drug cartel members killed three people in two separate attacks within five minutes of each other; to date, no one has been taken into custody for these crimes. A Post law enforcement official opined that the local police would act on intelligence passed to them about low level criminals, but they are too afraid to use such intelligence to catch the big fish of the drug cartels.

¶5. (C) Nuevo Leon police did arrest eight members of the gang 'los similares' on March 10. These criminals are suspected of committing at least four executions in Nuevo Leon in 2008, and kidnapping 15 people in 2007 and 2008. Although 'los similares' passed themselves off as Zetas, there is no indication that they were connected with a drug cartel. In contrast, there have not been any arrests of the perpetrators of the 55 drug executions in 2006 or the 107 killings committed in 2007.

¶6. (SBU) There is much less public outcry about drug violence now. Last year every execution was front page news, and the leading newspaper El Norte kept an interactive webpage on the location and data for each killing. Now El Norte covers the killings in the inside pages of its local section. Post press officer met with a senior El Norte editor, who seemed to genuinely believe that violence had declined. Similarly, last year after each killing our law enforcement contacts would buzz with the news; now there is little interest in the details of each death. Similarly, our economic contacts seem much less worried as the violence seems farther off and does not directly affect the more affluent communities. In addition, people have become more accustomed to drug killings, so their attention has moved on to other subjects.

¶7. (C) Comment. The state police, while capable of busting a killing and kidnapping ring when it is not associated with the cartels, seems to have little local appetite to hit the local drug cartels hard. The Mexican military and federal police continue to conduct operations, but there is little help from state and local forces. The only notable operation by state and local police was the March 6 sweep of detaining 381 people after the policeman was attacked, but almost all were released shortly afterwards, indicating, in our view, that it was more for show than a serious operation. End comment.

WILLIAMSON